GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1939
ANSWERED ON:26.07.2002
ENTRY OF DALITS IN TEMPLES
RAMDAS ATHAWALE

Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the entry of dalits in some temples is prohibited in the country even today;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Government have taken any steps to uproot the caste system;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the reasons for not uprooting the caste system?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRI S. B. MOOKHERJEE)

(a),(b),(c),(d),&(e)As per provision under Section 3 of the Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955,whoever on the ground of `untouchability` prevents any person from entering any place of public worship which is open to other persons professing the same religion, is liable for punishment for a term not less than one month and also with fine not less than Rupees One Hundred. This is a Central Legislation extending to the Whole of India and implemented by the State Government/Union territory Administrations.

Following steps are taken to eradicate untouchability:

(i) Under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme, financial assistance is provided to the StateGovernment on 50:50 basis and to Union Territory Administrations on 100% basis for implementation of the Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955 and taking measures such as provision of legal aid, appointment of officers for initiating or exercising supervision over prosecution, setting up of Committees and Special Courts, conducting periodic surveys etc.

(ii) Assistance for holding of Sadbhavana Shivirs and incentive for inter caste marriage are also extended for promoting social harmony and removal of untouchability.

(iii) State Government/UT Administrations have been requested to accord priority toimplementation of the protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955 and extend required assistance for ensuring that there is no discrimination on the ground of caste.

(iv) State Government where pendency of cases, is high have also been requested to set up exclusive Special Courts for expeditious disposal of cases registered under the Act.

(v) Reservation of posts in Government services, by mainstreaming the Scheduled Castes is a major factor in this direction.

(vi) The central Government has adopted a Budgetting pattern in which concerned Ministrieshave a Special Component Plan, which is for the welfare of the Scheduled Castes and their upliftment.

(vii) The Government has appointed the National Commission for Scheduled Castes andScheduled Tribes, which look into the problems of the Scheduled Castes. There is also theNational Scheduled Castes Finance and Development Corporation, which provides institutional finance to Scheduled Castes at concessional rate of interest and also looks after organizing training for skill and entrepreneurship development.